

0301. 1st 3 year Consortium Application

In 1994, Icco, EZE and Novib decided to form a 10 year Consortium to support ADATS' Coolie Sangha building programme in North Kolar district, and invite the European Union to co-finance.

This 3 year application, made for the period April 1995 to March 1998, spells out the long and short term objectives, describes the situation in which the programme was placed in early 1995, and goes on to describe the project means – Community Organisation (implementing an adult literacy programme, holding village level meetings and support to issues and struggles), developing Village Staff and functionaries, Coolie women (weekly Mahila Meetings, petty credit fund, decentralised health and children's budgets) strengthening the decentralised village level Coolie Credit Funds (CCFs), supporting Field Staff, building assets and infrastructure, and implementing a Dry Land Development Project (DLDP) on Coolie lands. This is followed by the programme budget.

Finally, this application contains an essay on the longer term perspective for the Consortium arrangement.

1. APPLICANT ORGANISATION

Agricultural Development & Training Society (ADATS)

Bagepalli 561 207,
Kolar district, Karnataka,
India.

2. LEGAL STATUS

Reg. No: 97/78-79 under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960.

Union Home Ministry Number: 094570001 under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, 1976.

3. BANKERS

Account Number: 3314 with Canara Bank, Bagepalli branch.

4. PROJECT TITLE

COOLIE SANGHA BUILDING IN NORTH KOLAR DISTRICT
(1st Consortium Budget for the period April 1995 to March 1998)

5. LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

- To build up the Coolie Sangha as village, Cluster and Taluk level mass organisations so that small and poor peasants struggling for their development can continually take stock of wider societal changes and make necessary adjustments to survive with dignity and security in a rapidly changing political economy.
- To create the physical and socio-political milieu capable of supporting and furthering a positive entrepreneurship in the Coolies.
- To oppose gender discrimination, sexual exploitation and strengthen the position of Coolie women so that they can contribute as equals to all further developments in the Coolie Sangha.
- To standardise and make uniform NGO inputs in the intervention strategy of Coolie Sangha building.

6. SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

- To accompany 3,491 Coolie Families in 121 villages of the erstwhile EZE supported Chintamani Extension Area through 2 more years of Coolie Sangha Formation (the 1st phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Conducting adult literacy classes in a target oriented and systematic manner.
 - Supporting issues and struggles with analytical assistance as well as with liaison work, Legal Aid and Aid Distress.
 - Introducing the structures and discipline of the mass organisation at the village and Cluster levels and stabilise CSU membership.
 - Initiating activities like community health as sole prerogatives of Coolie women.
 - Starting petty credit funds run exclusively by Coolie women.
 - Starting village level and decentralised credit structures (the CCFs) which will be managed by the Coolies themselves.
 - Withdrawing the ADATS paid Community Workers at the end of 2 years and help the Coolies to elect their own Cluster Secretaries.
- To accompany 7,106 Coolie Families in 254 villages of the erstwhile NOVIB supported Extension Areas through a 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Formalisation (the 2nd phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Inducting the Coolies as full fledged members of their respective Taluk Coolie Sanghas with voting rights.
 - Cultural intervention through the development of values and positions through an articulation of their own world view and the introduction of internal rectification as an ever present, active and over riding agenda of the Coolie Sangha at every level.
 - Helping the Coolies to identify larger issues of gender, ethnicity and environment which can be tackled only with a more mature unity and wider understanding.
 - Decentralising the community health budget so that Coolie women may themselves prioritise, manage and run the activity on their own without any male interference.
 - Starting a child scholarship activity for the government schooling of Coolie children, which will also be run by Coolie women.
 - Enhancing the capital of the village CCFs and introduce fiscal discipline into the CSUs as well as individual member families.
 - Developing the concept and principles of self financing and introduce its practice in the every day lives of Member Coolie families.
 - Withdrawing all the ADATS paid village Staff at the end of this 3 year period and hand over responsibilities to the elected CSU Representatives.
- To accompany 3,381 Coolie Families in 123 villages of the erstwhile ICCO supported Extension Areas through a 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation (the 3rd and final phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Further enhancing the capital of the village CCFs so that the Coolies may be able to enterprise in a more serious manner and make tangible economic achievements.
 - Implementing a Dry Land Development Project so that the Coolies may develop their patches of dry land through soil and water conservation (land stabilisation) measures and also achieve important socio-political objectives.¹

¹ Normally, in this Consolidation phase of Coolie Sangha building, we should have been assisting the Coolies to consolidate their economic base by converting a non viable subsistence agriculture into feasible enterprises with low external input sustainable agriculture practices. But the start of the DLDP in these villages of the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas was delayed due to various factors.

- Intensifying the cultural intervention through honest reflection and discussions on the post NGO intervention phase of the independent Coolie Sangha and on self financing.
- Withdrawing all ADATS Staff, including the Field Assistants and Area Field Workers at the end of this 3 year period and hand over all assets and responsibilities to the Taluk Coolie Sanghas and their elected functionaries.
- To undertake gap filling and maintenance (land restoration) works on the dry land holdings of 3,074 Coolie Families in 93 villages of Bagepalli Taluk where stabilisation works were carried out in the 1980's.

7. SITUATION IN WHICH THE PROJECT EXISTS

7.1. Membership & coverage

ADATS, along with our sister organisation, the Dairy Development Society (DDS), has been working with 17,052 Coolie Families in a total of 591 villages in 4 Taluks of north Kolar district for varying lengths of time. A break up is as under:

1st 3 Year Formation Phase	375	villages	10,597	families
2nd 3 Year Formalisation Phase	123	villages	3,381	families
3rd 3 Year Consolidation Phase	93	villages	3,074	families

Present Position of the CSUs as on September 1994

STAGE	B'palli	Cb'pur	C'mani	S'ghatta	J'palya	M'mari	TOTAL
Phase 1 (Formation)	20 (902)	87 (2,210)	186 (5,354)	45 (1,293)	9 (210)	28 (628)	375 (10,597)
Phase 2 (Formali- sation)	5 (214)	43 (1,121)	30 (925)	28 (741)	17 (380)		123 (3,381)
Phase 3 (Consoli- dation)	93 (3,074)						93 (3,074)
TOTAL	118 (4,190)	130 (3,331)	216 (6,279)	73 (2,034)	26 (590)	28 (628)	591 (17,052)

93 of these village CSUs in Bagepalli Taluk will become independent by March 1995 when ADATS withdraws.

This project proposal is for ADATS to accompany 13,978 Coolies families through CSU building in 498 villages over the next 3 year period from April 1995 to March 1998.

1st 3 Year Formation Phase	121	villages	3,491	families
2nd 3 Year Formalisation Phase	254	villages	7,106	families
3rd 3 Year Consolidation Phase	123	villages	3,381	families

This proposal also includes, as an exceptional activity, a 2nd phase of DLDP works (land restoration measures) to be undertaken in 93 CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk which will be managed exclusively by the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA (BCS).

7.2. The ADATS Consortium

By 1993 ADATS and our northern partners began to feel the need to pool together all our different strengths and specialisation, concerns and priorities in order to ensure that the intervention strategy to build Coolie Sangha Units in different villages did not differ too much due to disparities in these and in levels of funding. Moreover, the funding requirements had grown so much that it was no more possible for a single northern NGO to meet the entire budget of "it's own area of operation".

A consortium to support ADATS' Coolie Sangha building work in north Kolar district was formed on 1st April 1994 with ourselves, NOVIB, ICCO and EZE as its founding members. It was decided that financial integration of all the presently ongoing (sanctioned) projects into 1 single plan and budget would be effected from 1st April 1995.

The NOVIB supported programmes being implemented by ADATS will end by 31 December 1994, and the ICCO supported programmes by 31 March 1995. Since the EZE supported programme has life till 30 September 1996 it was decided to close it as on 31 March 1995 and integrate the still to be implemented activities into this present project proposal.

7.3. The ADATS/DDS Extension Programmes

ADATS works with a total of 17,052 Coolie Families in 591 villages comprising 12 Areas in 4 Taluks of northern Kolar district. Of these, the oldest are the Old, Chelur and Gulur Areas in Bagepalli Taluk. The first 2 were supported by NOVIB for the past 13 years. And the third was supported by EZE for the past 8 years.

In 1989, the work of ADATS was *extended* to 4 more Areas comprising 123 villages² (3,381 families) with ICCO support. Later in 1992 ADATS once again *extended* to 4 more Areas comprising over 254 villages³ (7,106 families) with NOVIB support. And in 1993 we yet again *extended* to 1 more Area comprising 121 villages (3,491 families) with EZE support.

All these are extensions of ADATS' Coolie Sangha building work towards a geopolitical coverage. In order to be relevant to the specific situation in each Taluk, these extensions are managed in a decentralised manner. Their setting up is neither to establish separate and independent entities nor to merely horizontally expand and grow for bigness sake. The CSUs, Clusters and Taluk fora built in these Taluks are a part of the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA and the people's organisation is not split or fractured on artificial Area or Taluk lines.

For more details on the ICCO supported Extension Programmes, please see the recent Progress Report dated August 1994 for Project No: 923333. For more details on the NOVIB supported Extension Programmes, please see the 4 "Grid of Parameter" Progress Reports dated December 1992, June 1993, December 1993 and June 1994 for Project No: Ida 014-92-003. For a better understanding of the EZE supported Chintamani Extension Programme, please see the document entitled "Managing the Chintamani Extension Programme" which forms a part of the application for EZE Project No: 93316 G.

7.4. Coolie Sangha Meetings

7.4.1. COOLIE SANGHA UNIT (CSU) MEETINGS

The CSU is the basic Coolie forum that ADATS helps build in each and every village. This is done primarily by holding regular CSU Meetings with minutes recorded every week and following up on decisions taken in these Meetings with concrete actions and struggles which ADATS supports. In principle, CSU Membership is open to all those who do not employ wage labour, irrespective of caste or community. In practice, the village level CSU is the final authority to decide on who they wish to take in, suspend or remove. Only 1 person from a family can be a member, though membership benefits are open to all the family members irrespective of whose name it actually stands in.

Each CSU elects 3 Representatives, 1 of them compulsorily a woman. The VLWs conduct weekly CSU Meetings on fixed days every week, record deliberations and decisions in the

² Includes 5 CSUs with 214 families in Bagepalli Taluk

³ Includes 20 CSUs with 902 families in Bagepalli Taluk

CSU Minutes Books, and ensure that these are carried out. CSU Meetings are normally held at about 8 p.m. and the quorum is two-third the current membership strength.

CSUs are ultimately responsible to ensure that all the efforts of ADATS reach individual Coolie Families. ADATS deals with Coolies only through the CSUs. ADATS does not extend any assistance to individual Coolies, be it financial, advice, Legal Aid, Aid Distress, Medical Aid, referral health, or other, unless the request is recommended by two-third the strength of a CSU. This positive advice is in the form of a resolution recorded in the CSU Minutes Book. If the matter is grave and involves inter-CSU relations or actions, then the positive advice of the Cluster Meet is sought before ADATS responds.

Changes or alterations in ADATS policy and programmes or the starting of a new project or activity are first discussed in all the CSU Meetings and Cluster Meets. Sufficient time is given for the Coolies to reflect on the import of what has been discussed, give suggestions, approve or disagree. These discussions and decisions are clearly recorded in the Minutes Books of the CSU Meetings and the Cluster Meets. Finally, the matter is thoroughly discussed in the monthly Taluk Coolie Sangha Meeting before a recommendation is made by the Core Group to the Governing Body for adoption as the official position of ADATS.

Under no event are these principles of Coolie participation and grassroots planning violated for the sake of convenience or expediency. The Field Staff personally satisfy themselves that a request for ADATS assistance is positively recommended by the CSU Meeting and/or the Cluster Meet before acting. At the same time ADATS does not tolerate any Staff member using these principles as excuses to justify shoddy work or incompetence. In our experience the quality of work improves when these principles are strictly adhered to.

The positive recommendation of the CSUs and Cluster Meets is not required to continue with regular activities of an ongoing project or activity. The Core Group and the ADATS Governing Body reserve the right to act in emergency situations without the advice of the Coolies. But this will be explained to the Coolies, and reasons given, at the earliest opportunity.

The principles of Coolie participation and grassroots planning are not followed in the first 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation phase in a new Area where it is not practical to expect the Coolies to substantially contribute. But even then, Meetings are held and the Coolies encouraged to familiarise themselves with the mechanisms of participation from the very beginning.

7.4.2. CLUSTER MEETS

Cluster Meets are the fora where ADATS enters into formal working relationships with Member Coolie families. All the elected CSU Representatives, VLWs and VHWs of the 6-7 villages that comprise it attend the Cluster Meets on fixed days every week at the central villages. They last for about 4 hours from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m. Deliberations and decisions are recorded in the Cluster Minutes Books. Field Assistants, Area Field Workers and Mahila Trainers compulsorily attend Cluster Meets in their respective Areas.

Weekly reports on each CSU are read out, needs identified, developments assessed, progress measured, plans made, problems solved and implementation bottlenecks overcome. Financial decisions involving the CCF, decentralised health budget, spending of Sangha Funds, etc. are ratified in these fora.

7.4.3. TALUK COOLIE SANGHA MEETINGS

From the 4th year of ADATS involvement in an Area, after the withdrawal of Community Workers, monthly Meetings of the Taluk Coolie Sangha are held for 2 days every month at the Taluk headquarters. ADATS started working in Chickballapur and Chintamani Taluks, with ICCO support, from 1989. These monthly Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings started in January 1993. 1 year later, similar Meetings started in Siddalaghatta Taluk also.

All the elected CSU Representatives, Cluster Secretaries, VLWs and VHWs attend these 2 days Meetings which are conducted by the respective Taluk Secretaries elected by all the CSU Representatives. Cluster Reports are read out to share the month's happenings in wider fora. Coolie issues that can be tackled only at the Taluk level with larger actions and wider participation are discussed and decided upon in these Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings.

ADATS policies and priorities are critically assessed by the Member Coolie families and special recommendations made. The Field and Executive Staff compulsorily attend these Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings in order to promote accountability. Special care is taken to ensure that these Meetings are not converted into fora for the delivering of discourses, training or lectures.

7.5. Anti-Poverty Programmes of the government

Coolies relate to the government in 2 ways. In a confrontation manner through issues and struggles, and as a mature and responsible body which can effectively implement anti poverty schemes. If this 2 pronged relationship is forgotten, the CSUs can well degenerate into merely providing the government with sorely needed social infrastructure to build show pieces. The ruling party will gain credibility in the eyes of the general intelligentsia and accumulate a huge electoral mileage.

ADATS does everything possible to promote this dual and seemingly dichotomous relationship between the Coolie Sangha and the government. We do not, at any stage, ourselves enter into any direct or indirect, formal or informal, relationship with the government.

ADATS also tries to rise above the specifics in order to do liaison work with banks and government offices at a broader level. We recommend arrangements and agreements that the Coolie Sangha can enter into for the implementation of various anti poverty schemes like the building of houses, construction of smokeless *Chullas*, execution of labour contracts, participation in the social forestry drive, implementation of special IGP programmes for women, and the like.

7.6. Village Staff & Functionaries

7.6.1. VILLAGE LEVEL WORKERS (VLWs)

VLWs are schooled and local Coolie youth appointed to work in their own villages for a maximum period of 6 years, in the Formation and Formalisation phases of Coolie Sangha building. Being both, Staff members of ADATS as well as members of their respective CSUs, VLWs are the most vital link between ADATS and the Coolie Sangha.

They conduct the daily ALP classes, children's classes, organise Meetings, cultural activities and training sessions. They conduct the weekly CSU Meetings and accurately record the minutes of these Meetings. They follow up on issues, struggles and actions. They attend the weekly Cluster Meets and Staff Meetings. They generally ensure that income and employment generating activities are meaningfully implemented in their villages. They are specifically responsible to ensure the proper utilisation and prompt repayment of CCF loans.

7.6.2. VILLAGE HEALTH WORKERS (VHWs)

VHWs are Coolie women selected by their respective Mahila Meetings. Many of them are either illiterate or neo-literate. They are not ADATS Staff in the strict sense of the term even though they are initially trained and paid for by ADATS. After 3 years, they directly report to their respective Mahila Meetings who pay their stipends from out of the decentralised health budgets.

Apart from imparting health education, rendering first aid and giving ante and post natal care, VHWs assist the women CSU Representatives to conduct weekly Mahila Meetings and at-

tend special training sessions with them. They encourage Coolie women who have not attended the mixed ALP classes along with men to attend the special round of ALP classes conducted exclusively for women. They follow up on everything that Coolie women decide upon in order to enhance their strength within the CSUs and assist in struggles they undertake in wider society.

7.6.3. CLUSTER SECRETARIES

5-6 CSUs are together clubbed into a Cluster. Initially, these Clusters are formed and looked after by ADATS paid Community Workers. After they are withdrawn at the end of the 1st 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation phase, Cluster Secretaries are elected every April by the CSU Representatives of each Cluster for 1 year terms.

Besides conducting Cluster Meets on fixed days every week, the Cluster Secretaries attend each and every one of the 5-6 weekly CSU Meetings and Mahila Meetings in their jurisdiction. They then have to work hard to follow up on decisions taken in these various fora. This includes extensive travel to solve problems and do liaison work with banks, government offices, higher Coolie Sangha functionaries and even with ADATS, meet with the police, lawyers and court officials, accompany members to specialised hospitals outside the Taluk, help make purchases, etc. Often times, when there is no literate member in the CSU, they are the ones who record the minutes of these Meetings in the respective Minutes Books. Though this is a full time job, the Coolies deliberately underpay their Cluster Secretaries in order to invite committed Coolies to work as “public servants” for limited periods of 1-2 years.

7.6.4. TALUK SECRETARIES

All the CSU Representatives and Cluster Secretaries together elect their Taluk Secretaries for 1 year terms every May. The Taluk Secretaries’ mornings are spent in Meeting with Coolies who come to the Taluk headquarters and getting their problems sorted out. After that, just like any Area Field Worker, they too attend Cluster Meets in the afternoon and then go on to a CSU with a pressing problem. Apart from this, they have countless appointments to represent Coolie interests at government offices, banks, with politicians, etc.

These elected Secretaries at each Taluk, along with the common BCS President, form the 4 Executive Committees which meet once a fortnight to review decisions taken in their respective Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings. The Field Workers sometimes sit in as observers. These Meetings serve to check perspectives and directions, bring in current and relevant grassroots information and take back larger ideas to the villages.

7.7. Coolie Women

7.7.1. MAHILA MEETINGS

Mahila Meetings are the fora through which ADATS interprets its policy of positive discrimination in favour of Coolie women. They are village level gatherings of 1 woman from each Member Coolie family that meet on a fixed day every week. These Meetings discuss problems that are particular and peculiar to Coolie women. No men are allowed to attend these exclusive Meetings of Coolie women. But at the same time Coolie women have the right and are encouraged to attend the mixed CSU Meetings. As a result, Mahila Meetings are platforms WITHIN the Coolie Sangha and not separate legal entities for Coolie women.

The decentralised health and children’s education budgets are handled by the Mahila Meetings at the village level. The positive advice of the Mahila Meeting is compulsory before releasing CCF loans. Each Mahila Meeting has a small fund (the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*) which women use to tide over day to day difficulties.

7.7.2. COMMUNITY HEALTH

Community health is the activity that Coolie women rally around, at least in the initial stages. It's health objectives thereby become secondary to the other more political one of strengthening women. Each Mahila Meeting selects, from among its own members, a Village Health Worker (VHW). ADATS Mahila Trainers give them training in basic health, hygiene, nutrition, ante and post natal care, simple curative skills and first aid. They are also sent to major hospitals for practical exposure in dealing with difficult deliveries.

After their training and exposure, maternity kits are distributed to the VHWs. Thereafter, a small package of basic curative medicines, first aid material, vitamins and other essential drugs are supplied to the VHWs every month. In the first years, the stipends of these VHWs is paid for by ADATS. But they are still not Staff members in the strict sense of the term. Instead they are the cadre that ADATS builds up in the villages.

Our experience is that while fairly strong women's groups are quickly built, the VHWs often compromise themselves for lack of adequate technical skill in their professed field. This is the reason why subject matter Specialists are called in from time to time to train and technically support them. In the course of a few years, we find the activity picking up in quality and the women become adept enough to plan and handle the activity in a competent manner. At that stage, in the 2nd 3 year Coolie Sangha Formalisation phase, the health budgets are decentralised and ADATS passes on whatever funds we have for community health to the Mahila Meetings in the form of annual grants.

After that the Mahila Meetings themselves prioritise and decide on how much they will pay their VHWs as monthly stipends, how much and what type of basic drugs they will buy every month, how much they will spend on referral health, etc. A woman -wife or mother or sister- from the patient's house explains the problem and requests her Mahila Meeting to please reimburse health expenses. All the women together consider the request and take a decision. Very often, they give her a hand loan from their *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* and ask the family to return the moneys rather than take something as gratis.

A study conducted about 1 year back showed that in spite of great variation from Mahila Meeting to Mahila Meeting, an average of 10% of health expenses incurred by families were reimbursed through the operation of this decentralised health budget. This same study also showed that in Bagepalli Taluk, where the Mahila Meetings are much older, women gave first priority to their own health needs, then to that of their children, and lastly to ailing Coolie men. But in the other 3 Taluks where the Mahila Meetings were relatively newer, Coolie women were the last to tend to their own persistent discomfiture and even major ailments.

7.7.3. VOKKAKU SANCHI DUDDU

Once the Mahila Meetings start functioning properly and 5 women from a village have attended the 3 day participatory training session, ADATS helps them set up small, informal credit and saving scheme with initial grants of Rs 1,000 per Mahila Meeting. These are called the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*. The objective of this fund is to counter sexual exploitation.

Half the money is kept with the VHW and the other half with the woman CSU Representative. When the capital increases, these 2 women keep a portion in a post office savings account in or close to their village. The idea is that moneys are readily available during every day emergencies. Coolie women use these moneys, without any male interference, to meet urgent needs like tending to a sick child, buying rations from the fair price shop, entertaining unexpected house guests, etc. Since a small portion of these moneys sometimes get "stuck" with borrowers who are unable to repay, these grants are further enhanced every year without any questions asked.

7.7.4. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

In the month of May every year, the Mahila Meetings make lists of children they would like to support through the decentralised children's programme budget of Rs 200 per child that ADATS gives out to them. They examine the very many functioning and defunct government schemes, assess each member families' ability to support their own children's education, and finally decide how much they would support each child with (full/half/none) and for what purpose (fees/books/ clothes/bus fares). Though mostly illiterate and neo-literate, Coolie women have shown that they are able to handle large sums of moneys quite efficiently.

In the month of July, all the mothers and supported children come to the Taluk headquarters to take their individual cheques and encash them. The Field Staff then follow up to ensure that the scholarships are properly utilised. For the rest of the academic year, the Mahila Meetings monitor the supported children's school attendance and use their balance unspent moneys to buy play material for the children, pay for extra tuition, etc.

3,665 children are presently being supported in the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas. 65% of them are in primary classes, 23% in middle and 12% in high school. 41% of the supported children are girls and 59% boys.

7.8. Field Staff

7.8.1. PROJECTS ASSISTANTS

2 Projects Assistants – one a woman and the other a man – focus on various thematic concerns in Coolie Sangha building like gender, participatory democracy, geopolitical coverage, decentralisation, withdrawal, communal harmony, income and employment generation, etc.

The primary responsibility of the Projects Assistants is to ensure that authentic and independent Taluk Coolie Sanghas are built up as federated branches of the BCS. They work to integrate the CSUs being formed at each Area into the respective Taluk Coolie Sangha. They have field and executive (excluding finance) responsibilities for implementing programme within approved plans and budgets. They enhance established systems and practices by introducing new experiences and insights. They continually visit the programme villages and establish a direct rapport with Member Coolie families.

Field Assistants, Extension Workers and subject matter Specialists directly report to the Projects Assistants. Area Field Workers and village Staff (Community Workers, VLWs and VHWs) report to the Projects Assistants through the Field Assistants. But the Desk Workers, who handle day to day finances, work under the direction of the Accounts Admn Assistant.

The Projects Assistants negotiate with development agencies, banks and government offices to enhance the programme and recommend that the Coolie Sangha enters into arrangements and agreements with them for the implementation of anti-poverty schemes. They attend the weekly Area Staff Meetings and make special efforts to enhance the conceptual clarity and analytical skills of village Staff. They encourage the village Staff to collectively define their own job descriptions, set their own targets, and monitor their own performances.

The Projects Assistants ensure that Staff attitudes and other conditions (including Sangha Funds collected by the Member Coolie families themselves) are congenial for ADATS withdrawal from the Taluk and the handing over of assets and responsibilities to the Taluk Coolie Sangha branches of the BCS within 9 years of involvement in an Area of about 50-60 villages.

The Projects Assistants introduce the practice of grassroots planning to make village level budgets for all economic and service oriented projects. They contribute to the writing and finalising of project applications, 6 monthly activity reports and annual progress reports. Such

applications and reports continually redefine the details of work and responsibilities that they commit themselves to.

7.8.2. FIELD ASSISTANTS

Field Assistants are appointed to work in specific Areas of about 50-60 villages⁴ for 9 years during Coolie Sangha building. Their responsibilities are restricted to CSU building activities in their own respective Areas. They make informal socio-political surveys of contiguous Areas, delineate 50-60 villages, and select central villages. They continually visit these villages and establish a direct rapport with the village Staff and Member Coolie families. Field Assistants conduct their monthly Area Staff Meetings. They ensure that baseline socio-economic surveys are conducted, data entered into the central computer, and that this data is updated and authenticated through constant usage.

2 Area Field Workers and 1 Mahila Trainer report to 1 Field Assistant. In day to day matters the Field Assistants exercises an administrative control over the functioning of these Area Field Workers and Mahila Trainer. But at the same time they have the maturity to realise that Area Field Workers and Mahila Trainers are selected by the BCS and directly recruited by the Accounts Admn Assistant. The Field Assistants are, in this respect, akin to specialist consultants. The village Staff -Community Workers, VLWs and VHWs- report to their respective Field Assistants.

The Field Assistants recruit Community Workers, give them a basic orientation and skill training, and settle them in central villages. They select the VLWs, impart skill training and start ALP classes and weekly Meetings. They help the Mahila Meetings select their VHWs, impart skill training, start basic and referral health activities, and initiate a positive discrimination in favour of Coolie women through them.

They mediate with development agencies, banks, government offices, police, courts and lawyers to solve day to day problems faced by the village Staff and Member Coolie families. They assist the Member Coolie families and their CSUs to undertake government anti-poverty schemes. They do all this in a manner as to not effect capacity building in the Coolies themselves. The Field Assistants relate to other ADATS Staff in weekly Situation Meetings in order to enhance the cohesiveness, unity and effectivity of the total effort.

7.8.3. AREA FIELD WORKERS

Committed Coolie youth who are well versed with ADATS and the Coolie Sangha by virtue of having first worked in their own villages as VLWs and then somewhere else as Community Workers are selected by the BCS to work as Area Field Workers and Mahila Trainers.

The Mahila Trainer is a woman Field Worker with special and additional responsibility to train and help Coolie women set up the Mahila Meetings and handle the decentralised budgets. In our popular parlance, the term "Area Field Worker" often includes the Mahila Trainer as well. However, previous work experience at ADATS is not insisted upon when selecting Mahila Trainers. A separate paragraph is devoted in this document to the special role of the Mahila Trainers.

Their being both, Staff members of ADATS as well as Member Coolies of the BCS with electoral rights and responsibilities, places the Area Field Workers in delicate positions requiring them, as well as the remaining Staff, to play a balanced and mature role in the ADATS organogram. Though the Field Assistants and Projects Assistants exercise a day to day administrative control over Area Field Workers, their employment is determined by the Accounts Admn Assistant in consultation with the BCS.

⁴ The erstwhile EZE supported Chintamani Area is a notable exception - 1 Field Assistant, 3 Area Field Workers and 1 Mahila Trainer look after this vast Area with 121 villages

2 Area Field Workers are appointed to work for 9 years in an Area of 50-60 villages, which is then divided between them. The Community Workers, VLWs and VHVs report to them. In turn, they report to the Field Assistant. Yet at the same time Area Field Workers maintain a cordial relationship with the Field Assistants and treat them as specialist consultants who are there to help and guide them.

After spending the mornings at the offices to deal with Coolies who visit the Taluk headquarters, Area Field Workers leave at 1 p.m. every single afternoon to compulsorily attend all the Cluster Meets of their sub Areas and as many CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and ALP classes as possible. They have an intimate knowledge of village situations, village Staff and individual Member Coolie families. They mediate and settle inter and intra CSU disputes, and do liaison work with government offices and others on behalf of Member Coolie families. They ensure that there is no caste or communal discrimination in the CSUs, and that there is a positive discrimination in favour of Coolie women.

Area Field Workers are directly responsible for the implementation of ALP classes and cultural activities of the CSUs. They encourage and assist the Member Coolie families to directly implement anti-poverty schemes of the government through their CSUs, avoiding village touts and agents. Though not directly responsible for the implementation of economic projects like the CCFs, Area Field Workers ensure that procedural requirements designed to keep these activities subservient to larger socio-political goals are not compromised.

Area Field Workers are directly responsible to ensure that qualities of representation (as opposed to leadership) are developed in the CSUs and that everything is conducive for the withdrawal of Community Workers after 3 years, VLWs after 6 years and themselves after 9 years. On completion of their 9 year contract, Area Field Workers return to their native CSUs, until asked by the BCS to work in another Area. They are, however, subject to transfer from one Area to another.

7.8.4. MAHILA TRAINERS

The job of the Mahila Trainer is an unenviable one with a full calendar. All the below listed tasks are not carried out by them single handed. Each and every one of the Field Staff pitch in to do routine and mundane jobs like, for example, the monthly distribution of basic medicines. But there are some things like the conducting of women's training that only they can do. Every Monday, the Mahila Trainers report to the ADATS Core Group in the Monitoring Meetings. But they also separately report to the woman Projects Assistant and develop themselves into a team within ADATS.

Mahila Trainers accompany the Field Assistant and Area Field Workers as equals, attending all the Cluster and CSU Meetings, and are fully involved in the preliminary stages of Coolie Sangha building. They ensure that congenial conditions are built for the total and unreserved participation of women. When the 5th round of Women's ALP classes are conducted it is the Mahila Trainers who have to motivate women to avail this opportunity in all the villages to not just attain literacy skills, but also further strengthen their position.

Their actual work starts with a gruelling schedule when the Mahila Meetings select their VHVs. After helping them in this task, Mahila Trainers conduct 3 day training session for the largely illiterate and neo-literate VHVs and arrange for their practical exposure at hospitals and clinics. They then involve themselves in the details of putting the health activity in order, continually liaising with referral hospitals and doctors, and bargaining for best possible prices and terms from medicine suppliers.

Once the Mahila Meetings become a regular feature in all the CSUs, the Mahila Trainers visit them on a very regular every evening basis in order to sort out the nitty-gritty problems and obstacles that come up when Coolie women start to meet separately and assert their identity.

Then the Mahila Trainers organise continuous rounds of participatory training sessions, each of 3 days duration, for batches of 5 Coolie women from 5 villages each. These are highly emotive and personalised affairs where the women are coaxed to come out with their own experiences in an attempt to place the position of Coolie women within their own families and in village society to understand concepts like the labour contribution of women, feminisation of poverty, sexual exploitation and the rest. The Mahila Trainers try their best to ensure that such sessions are held for each village at least once a year. This means that at least 1 such session is held every week, the whole year round, at each of the 4 Taluks.

At the end of the 1st such 3 day session, the Mahila Trainers arrange for the 5 villages who attended to get their first *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* grants of Rs 1,000 per Mahila Meeting. Later, these grants for the women to run their petty credit funds are enhanced according to current membership and need. Apart from the Mahila Trainers and the woman Projects Assistant, no one else ever interferes with matters connected to the utilisation of these funds.

The Mahila Trainers arrange for the 50-60 VHWs in their villages to be sent on exposure trips to hospitals and other places. These visits have to be very properly arranged to ensure that maximum benefits are derived in terms of both, exposure as well as developing useful contacts.

7.8.5. COMMUNITY WORKERS

Community Workers have been appointed to live and work in 15 new Clusters of the erstwhile EZE supported Area for a maximum period of 3 years. When the Community Workers are withdrawn, elected Cluster Secretaries will take over.

Community Workers are Coolie youth who have already worked for about 6 years in their native villages as VLWs. But under special circumstances, committed Coolie youth from the Taluk who have not previously worked in ADATS have also been appointed as Community Workers. Their role is crucial since they are the ones who introduce ADATS and the Coolie Sangha building effort in a totally new Area. Though ADATS normally enters a village only when some Coolies from there invite us, yet it is the personal conduct and enthusiasm of the Community Workers which convinces the remaining Coolies to come forward and build CSUs.

Community Workers are responsible for initiating CSU building activities like the identification of VLWs, starting ALP classes, and setting up procedures in a new Cluster. These include regular Meetings with a compulsory quorum and minutes recorded, election of CSU Representatives, etc.

Community Workers, along with the Coolies of each village, together select VLWs and VHWs who report to them on a day to day basis. They impart a political orientation to the VLWs, VHWs and Member Coolie families through formal and informal discussions. They help the Member Coolie families tap government funds and resources for directly implementing anti poverty programmes through their CSUs, by-passing touts and agents.

ADATS does not implement income and employment generating activities on a serious scale during the 3 year tenure of Community Workers and so they do not have any role in implementing them. Instead Community Workers lay the basis for these activities by explaining the need to keep economic programmes subservient to political goals, the need for grassroots planning and monitoring, and the intrinsic connection between unity, organisation and individual economic development.

7.9. COMMUNITY HALLS

7.9.1. THE NEED

The mainstay of ADATS' Coolie Sangha building effort is Meetings and training. It is these Meetings which ensure the smooth implementation of all activities and sustain them to last beyond our intervention. It is necessary to provide logistical support for these Meetings and training by building proper community halls in all the central villages.

This culture of Meetings is very novel and exhilarating for Coolies who have lived their whole lives in a culture of tolerated indiscipline. All of a sudden, they find their getting together and talking to be productive. We believe that this is something which has to be encouraged, symbolically propped up, and supported. The building of permanent structures in all the central villages provide the visual and physical focal points for Member Coolie families to identify themselves with the Coolie Sangha.

ADATS has, over the past 17 years, built 78 Community Halls⁵ in as many CSUs. We have also built full fledged Cluster Offices in 5 central villages.

7.9.2. USAGE

The usage of these Community Halls is decided upon by the respective Clusters. In addition to being used for conducting their weekly Meetings, different CSUs use their buildings for a variety of other purposes.

- the every evening classes for Coolie children are conducted in these buildings,
- their ALP classes are held here,
- the fact that they can provide accommodation is used as a leverage to get the government organised *Anganwadi* (crèches and under-5 child care centres) that most Mahila Meetings struggle for,
- school going youth study late into the night and sleep in them,
- guests and marriage parties are accommodated in them,
- cultural programmes are held in these buildings,
- families who lose their huts in fire accidents are temporarily sheltered in them, and other destitute Coolies accommodated, and
- Member Coolie families use these buildings to sleep in during the rainy season.

7.10. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFS)

7.10.1. PROCEDURES & OBJECTIVES

CCFs are alternate credit structures that ADATS helps each CSU build at the village level. ADATS gives grants for the Member Coolie families to run their respective CCFs. They borrow moneys from their CCFs for petty productive, productive and consumption purposes, and repay on dates that they agree to at the time of taking the loans.

Once fairly mature and functioning Coolie Sanghas are built, Member Coolie families at each CSU elect their Cheque Signatories and open CCF bank accounts in the names of their respective CSUs. ADATS then gives out starter grants for them to begin their alternate credit structure. Later, further grants are given for the Coolies to enhance the capital of their CCFs.

The CCFs operate on a no loss plan. In the event of a particular borrower not repaying a loan, all the remaining Member Coolie families of the village contribute to repay the CCF on her behalf and later make efforts to collect from the defaulter. The CCFs also operate on a no

⁵ Sometimes also called *Balakendras* or children's centres

gain basis. There is no interest charged on loans. But, as per the BCS guideline to Member Coolie families, they are asked to voluntarily contribute 10% of their loan amounts to their respective Sangha Funds. This “*hidden cost*” of the CCF could work out, for example, to an indirect interest rate of 20% for a 6 month crop loan, 10% for a 1 year trade loan, or 3.3% for a 3 year loan to rear sheep.

Those wishing to borrow from their CCF place their case before the CSU Meeting, explain the need, utilisation plan and a realistic repayment date. There are no standard or forced repayment dates on CCF loans. Once the CSU Meeting approves of the amount and repayment date, this decision goes to the Mahila Meeting which has a veto right on CCF related decisions. It then gets ratified by the Cluster Meet before the loan is given out.

All CCF transactions are by cheque. ADATS retains a Cheque Signatory control over the CCF bank accounts. The Executive Assistant counter-signs cheques along with the elected CSU Representative. The Desk Workers maintain the CCF account books, pass books and cheque books. The Extension Workers ensure that mutually agreed upon procedures and conditions are met. Though this is the primary responsibility of the Extension Workers, VLWs, Community Workers and Area Field Workers assist them in this regard. The Extension Workers constantly supply the Executive Assistant with updates on the utilisation and repayment patterns of the CCFs.

7.10.2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Throughout the 3 phases of Coolie Sangha building, ADATS gradually keeps increasing the CCF capitals of individual CSUs based on their current membership strength. The reason for this gradual enhancement is that we do not believe that economic development comes about merely by bridging the gap between need and opportunity. Entrepreneurship is a state of mind which does not only have to do with skills, credit, marketing and the like. It comes about through the development of a symbiotic relationship between the individual and the community. As has been clearly shown by the Coolies of Bagepalli in their “9 Steps to Become Rich”,⁶ one cannot promote entrepreneurship in a people without tackling questions of gender, family structure, ethnicity and social custom. These are subtle imponderables which promote the spirit of positive entrepreneurship in a people whose fiscal discipline has been deliberately crushed and a state of total dependence consciously created. These have to be slowly and painstakingly built up through cultural interventions which are very fundamental in nature. Once again to quote a BCS Secretary, “The two are one – the CCFs are the CSUs and the CSUs are the CCFs!”.

Credit, skill training and market management are therefore not the cornerstone panacea that many people misconceivedly make them out to be. They are vital requisites which one cannot do without in a much bigger, holistic and composite effort at economic development.

Once the clear outlines of a functioning community that can deal with both, the ups as well as the downs, are hammered out, with the identities of individuals clearly etched out in this grouping; when the systems that guarantee support as well as exercise control are in place; when a fiscal discipline is introduced; ADATS stops exercising control over village CCFs with proven track records of proper utilisation and prompt repayment. Another Member Coolie is elected to become the 2nd Cheque Signatory and the CSUs themselves begin to independently run their CCFs. At this stage, ADATS’ only contribution to the CCFs is the services of Desk Workers deputed to the respective Taluk Coolie Sanghas to take care of book keeping procedures and statutory requirements. This is on the verge of happening in 93 CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk.

⁶ Please see our 2nd Progress Report on the DLDP 2nd Phase dated September 1993

7.10.3. PRESENT STATUS OF THE CCFs

As on today, ADATS has granted out a total of Rs 21,670,925 to 676 village CCFs. The CSUs have utilised this amount to give out 18,453 loans averaging Rs 1,184 each. Member Coolie families have borrowed for a variety of reasons, the most popular being crop loans. 45% of the amounts borrowed and 60% of the loans have been for this alone. Cattle rearing is the next most popular purpose, accounting for 35% of the amounts borrowed and 18% of loans. They have also borrowed for agriculture, trade, consumption and a host of other purposes. The Repayment Rate is 83.51% and 15.75% of the capital is at risk through overdue. Real and tangible results have been attained in the 93 older CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk with over 75% of the Member Coolie families having attained assured income levels of over Rs 1,000 per month. This has been possible mainly through the CCFs.

Status of the CCFs as on 17 September 1994

Grants given to 676 village level CCFs	21,670,925		
Interest earned in the SB Bank Accounts	1,212,212		
Total CCF Capital in all the Areas	22,883,137	100%	
Total of Good loans in all the Areas	5,430,835	23%	
Total of Overdue in all the Areas	3,540,445	15%	
1 to 6 Months Late	1,207,816	5%	
7 to 12 Months Late	1,048,234	4%	
Over 1 Year Late	1,284,395	5%	
Total of Bad debts in all the Areas	62,975	0%	
CCF Bank Balances in all the Areas	13,851,314	60%	
Cumulative loans given	21,855,630		
Number of loans	18,453		
Average borrowing	1,184		
Repayment Rate	83.51%		
Capital at Risk	15.75%		
Utilisation pattern	Amount borrowed		No of loans
Crop Loan	99,10,041.00	45%	11,212
Agriculture	16,88,781.75	7%	781
Cattle	78,22,804.50	35%	3,399
Trade & Entrepreneurship	16,66,570.00	7%	1,315
Consumption & others	7,67,433.60	3%	1,746
Total	218,55,630.85		18,453

7.11. DRY LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (DLDP)

In the 1980's a DLDP was conducted in the erstwhile NOVIB and EZE supported Areas of Bagepalli Taluk. Extensive soil and water conservation (land stabilisation) works were carried out on all the Member Coolie families' lands. Apart from improving the economic base of the Coolies, very important socio-political gains were also made.

From 1994 a similar project was started in the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas. Additionally, 2nd phase (land restoration) works were also started in the CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk. For a detailed description of this project, please see the ICCO Progress Report dated August 1994 for Project No: 923333.

8. PROJECT MEANS FOR THIS 3 YEAR PROPOSAL

8.1. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

8.1.1. ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME (ALP) CLASSES

In 121 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE supported Area, the 3rd to 5th rounds of ALP classes will continue as originally planned in the Project Application and Annex entitled “Managing the Chintamani Extension Programme” which formed the basis for the sanctioned and presently ongoing EZE Project No: 93316 G.

General ALP classes will be conducted in all the 121 villages with compulsory attendance from April 1995. From October 1995 the 4th round of Advanced ALP classes will be conducted for interested learners. And finally, Women’s ALP classes will start from January 1996. This 5th round of Women’s ALP classes will be exclusively conducted for Coolie women. Though women have been encouraged to attend all the earlier mixed rounds, it is possible that many would have felt diffident and stayed away. Once these special classes are over, the final ALP Tests will be conducted, the programme evaluated, and the ALP will be closed.

8.1.2. COOLIE SANGHA MEETINGS

CSU Representatives and village Staff from 377 CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO and NOVIB supported Areas are already attending their respective Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings every month. Elected CSU Representatives from 121 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE supported Area will start attending the Chintamani Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings from April 1996 when the 1st 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation phase gets over. But developments in these 121 villages have nevertheless been figuring in the ongoing monthly Meetings from September 1993.

Weekly CSU and Mahila Meetings will continue with the same regularity in all 498 villages. Cluster Meets will also be held as points of working contact between ADATS and the Coolie Sangha in all the 85 central villages every week.

8.1.3. SUPPORT TO ISSUES & STRUGGLE

The Field Staff assist will continue to assist the Coolies to redress specific grievances with government offices through various forms of representation. On the recommendation of the CSUs, ADATS will extend Legal Aid and Aid Distress to individual Coolies to fight for their rights and overcome grave emergencies.

Member Coolie families will be encouraged to reflect on issues and struggles, and record all the direct benefits they obtain from the government in their CSU Minutes Books. In this manner, the impact of CSU building on tapping government resources is continually monitored by the Member Coolie families themselves, since this is a serious objective lending to sustainability.

8.2. VILLAGE STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

121 and 254 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE and NOVIB supported Areas which will be in the Coolie Sangha Formation and Formalisation phases, respectively, will have ADATS paid VLWs working in them for the next 3 years. There will be no VLWs in 123 CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas which will be entering the 3rd and final phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation.

70 ADATS paid Cluster Secretaries will be working in the erstwhile NOVIB and ICCO supported Areas. This will be the last such salary input in the ICCO supported Areas since these CSUs will become independent as on April 1998 after having completed 9 years of NGO intervention. The remaining 15 Clusters in the erstwhile EZE supported Area will be Staffed by

Community Workers till March 1997. From April 1997 they too will elect Cluster Secretaries whose stipends will be paid for by ADATS for the next 6 years.

ADATS will also pay the stipends of 4 elected Taluk Secretaries for the next 3 years. This, in spite of most of the CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk (93 out of 118) having entered the post intervention independent phase, because we are still to make permanent arrangements for the self financing and continuity of the Coolie Sangha in Bagepalli Taluk.

8.3. MAHILA MEETINGS

8.3.1. COMMUNITY HEALTH

We will give out grants calculated at Rs 17 per member per month to 10,487 families in 377 CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO and NOVIB supported Areas. These grants will be with the Mahila Meetings and enable them to pay their VHWS, buy basic medicines every month, and reimburse part of the expenses incurred by patients having to go to doctors and hospitals.

ADATS will directly bear the monthly cost of basic medicines and VHW stipends in 121 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE supported Area since these Mahila Meetings are still in the initial Formation phase.

8.3.2. VOKKAKU SANCHI DUDDU

Mahila Meetings in the erstwhile ICCO and NOVIB supported Areas already have sufficient capital in their petty credit accounts. Some of this money is with the VHW, some more with the woman CSU Representative, and the rest in post office savings bank accounts in or near their villages. In the event of any of them needing more capital, they are quite capable of borrowing from their village CCFs and revolving the amounts to meet the pressing needs of Coolie women.

During the next 3 years we will slowly build up the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* of the 121 CSUs in the erstwhile EZE supported Area with capitals of Rs 5,000 per Mahila Meeting.

8.3.3. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

ADATS will continue to give out grants to 377 CSUs in the erstwhile ICCO and NOVIB supported Areas so that they can continue this activity for a total of 10,487 Coolie children -i.e. 1 child per family- at the rate of Rs 200 per child per year. The programme will not be started in 121 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE supported Area since those Mahila Meetings are still in the Formation phase of Coolie Sangha building.

8.4. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFS)

8.4.1. INITIAL CCF GRANTS TO 3,491 FAMILIES IN 121 CSUS

In April 1995, once fairly mature and functioning Coolie Sanghas are built up, Member Coolie families at each of the 121 CSU in the erstwhile EZE supported Area will elect their Cheque Signatories and open CCF bank accounts in the names of their respective CSUs. ADATS will give out starter grants of Rs 250 per membership strength for them to begin their alternate credit structure. After 1 year, in April 1996, another matching CCF grant of Rs 250 per membership strength will be given by ADATS to all these 121 CSUs to increase the per capita CCF capital in their CSUs to Rs 500 per Member Coolie family. We do not expect that any real economic gain will be made with such meagre sums of capital. But the objective of the CCFs during this 1st 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation phase is to instil a unity and discipline in the face of money management.

8.4.2. ENHANCING CCF GRANTS TO 7,108 FAMILIES IN 254 CSUS

Member families in the erstwhile NOVIB supported Areas have a per capita CCF capital of Rs 182 with them. Further grants will be given out to these CSUs to enhanced it by another

Rs 2,250 over a 3 year period. This will enable them to borrow for tangible economic objectives like crop loans and cattle rearing, creating lasting family assets.

8.4.3. FURTHER ENHANCING CCF GRANTS TO 3,381 FAMILIES IN 123 CSUS

In the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas, member families already have a per capita CCF capital of Rs 2,403 with them. Further grants will be given out to enhance it by another Rs 1,000. Managing such serious sums of moneys and making visible dents in family income and asset positions will give the Coolies the vision, visibility and leverage needed to deal with wider institutional finance in a responsible manner and embark on serious economic development.

8.5. FIELD STAFF

The 498 villages that we will be working in during the next 3 years have been divided into 9 Areas for administrative reasons.

Taluk	Areas	Field Assistants	Area Field Workers	Mahila Trainers
Chickballapur Taluk	2	2	4	3
Chintamani Taluk	3	3	6	3
Siddalaghatta Taluk	2	1	2	2
Bagepalli Taluk				
Julapalya Area	1	1	1	1
Mittermari Area	1		1	
Total	9	7	14	9

These 9 Areas are Staffed by 7 Field Assistants (at Siddalaghatta and Bagepalli the Field Assistants look after 2 Areas each), 14 Area Field Workers and 9 Mahila Trainers. The erstwhile EZE supported Area at Chintamani has 15 Community Workers who will be withdrawn in March 1997.

8.6. ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

8.6.1. COMMUNITY HALLS

15 Community Halls will be built in as many central villages of the erstwhile EZE supported Area from April 1997 and get over in about 9 months. The implementation plan is as under:

- 15 Cluster Meets will, after serious deliberations, select the central villages where they want the community halls to be built, and identify plots of land with clear titles. They will buy these plots of land in the name of the Coolie Sangha.
- The 15 central village VLWs will identify suppliers of construction material like stones, bricks, red earth and sand. The CSU Representatives will satisfy themselves on quality, negotiate and fix prices. Cement and steel will be bought centrally by the Extension Workers.
- The Cluster Meets will negotiate terms with masons who are prepared to train and upgrade the skills of at least 2 Member Coolie families from each village in the course of building these community halls.
- The Community Workers will be responsible for the safekeeping of all construction material and ensure that the quality specified by the Extension Workers is maintained.
- The Desk Worker will personally make payments once a week, on the advice of the Extension Worker, after perusing the Cluster Minutes Book to ensure that all the Member Coolie families are aware of what is going on.

- The fixing of doors, windows and electrification of the halls will be done centrally by carpenters, fabricators and electricians chosen in the Area Staff Meeting.

8.6.2. WOMEN'S DORMITORY & TRAINING HALL

We have often found it difficult to hold the every week participatory sessions for 25 women (5 women from 5 villages) due to distractions and disturbances. If a proper training hall which can, whenever necessary, be divided in smaller rooms is built at the BCS' 42 acre farm near Bagepalli, then we could hold all the 4 training sessions there, simultaneously. It is for this reason that we have proposed to build these 2 structures in this project application.

Such an asset in the name of the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA could also be used for a horde of other special gatherings like reviews, etc.

8.7. DRY LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (DLDP)

The DLDP will be continued for 3,381 families in 123 CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO supported Areas with 100 days of work (4 months, February to May) being carried out every year for the next 3 years.

Additionally, 75 days of once-off works (i.e. not every year) will be conducted in 93 CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk to maintain the soil and water conservation structures already built in the 1980's. These will be staggered over a period of 3 years, with only 31 villages taken up each year. The Agriculturist and DLDP Field Worker will concentrate on introducing low external input sustainable agriculture practices in all 93 CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk.

9. PROJECT BUDGET

S. No.	Head of Account	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	TOTAL
1.	COMMUNITY ORGANISATION				
1.1.	Food costs to conduct 3 Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings for 2 days every month @ Rs 12,000 per Meeting	432,000	432,000	432,000	
1.2.	Food costs to conduct 9 monthly Area Staff Meetings with 1,000 village Staff attending	54,000	54,000	54,000	
1.3.	Food costs to conduct weekly Monitoring & Situation Meetings at Bagepalli with 50 Staff attending	26,000	26,000	26,000	
1.4.	Disposition fund for subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals, repair of bicycles and Petromax lamps, etc. in 85 Clusters @ Rs 4,000 every year	340,000	340,000	340,000	
1.5.	Disposition funds for extending Legal Aid and Aid Distress	100,000	100,000	100,000	2,856,000
2.	STIPENDS				
2.1.	375 VLWs in the erstwhile NOVIB and EZE Areas @ Rs 400	1,800,000	1,800,000	1,800,000	
2.2.	70 Cluster Secretaries in the erstwhile ICCO and NOVIB Areas @ Rs 500	420,000	420,000	420,000	
2.3.	15 Cluster Secretaries in the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 500			90,000	
2.4.	4 Taluk Secretaries @ Rs 1,200	57,600	57,600	57,600	6,922,800
3.	MAHILA MEETINGS				
3.1.	Decentralised health budget to be given to 10,487 member families in the erstwhile NOVIB and ICCO Extension Areas @ Rs 17 p.m.	2,139,348	2,139,348	2,139,348	

3.2.	Cost of basic medicines to be supplied to 121 Mahila Meetings in the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 150 p.m.	217,800	217,800	217,800	
3.3.	Stipends for 121 VHWs in the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 150 p.m.	217,800	217,800	217,800	
3.4.	Maternity kits to be supplied to all 498 VHWs @ Rs 300	149,400			
3.5.	Disposition fund for training all 498 VHWs @ Rs 200 every year	99,600	99,600	99,600	
3.6.	Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu grants to be given to 121 Mahila Meetings in the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 5,000	201,667	201,667	201,667	
3.7.	Grants to be given to 377 Mahila Meetings in the Formation and Formalisation Phases for them to run their decentralised children's programme for 10,487 children @ Rs 200 per child per year	2,097,400	2,097,400	2,097,400	15,070,244
4.	COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFs)				
4.1.	Initial CCF grants for 3,491 families in 121 CSUs of the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 500 per member	872,750	872,750		
4.2.	Enhancing CCF grants for 7,106 families in 254 CSUs of the erstwhile NOVIB Areas @ Rs 2,250 per member	5,329,500	5,329,500	5,329,500	
4.3.	Further enhancing CCF grants for 3,381 families in 123 CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO Areas @ Rs 1,000 per member	1,127,000	1,127,000	1,127,000	
4.4.	Salary of 5 Extension Workers @ Rs 3,000 p.m.	180,000	180,000	180,000	
4.5.	Salary of 4 Exec Field Workers @ Rs 2,000 p.m.	96,000	96,000	96,000	
4.6.	10% Staff Fund	27,600	27,600	27,600	
4.7.	Running costs of 5 motorcycles @ Rs 1,500 p.m.	90,000	90,000	90,000	22,295,800
5.	FIELD STAFF				
5.1.	2 Projects Assistants @ Rs 4,000	96,000	96,000	96,000	
5.2.	7 Field Assistants @ Rs 4,000	336,000	336,000	336,000	
5.3.	14 Area Field Workers @ Rs 2,000	336,000	336,000	336,000	
5.4.	9 Mahila Trainers @ Rs 1,500	162,000	162,000	162,000	
5.5.	15 Community Workers @ Rs 1,000	180,000	180,000		
5.6.	10% Staff Fund	111,000	111,000	93,000	3,465,000
6.	ACCOUNTS/ADMN STAFF				
6.1.	2 Accounts Assistants @ Rs 4,000	96,000	96,000	96,000	
6.2.	6 Desk Workers @ Rs 3,000	216,000	216,000	216,000	
6.3.	7 Drivers @ Rs 1,500	126,000	126,000	126,000	
6.4.	10 Cooks/Helpers @ Rs 600	72,000	72,000	72,000	
6.5.	10% Staff Fund	51,000	51,000	51,000	1,683,000
7.	CENTRAL STAFF				
7.1.	Project Director @ Rs 4000	48,000	48,000	48,000	
7.2.	Accounts Admn Assistant @ Rs 4,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	
7.3.	Executive Assistant @ Rs 4,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	
7.4.	BCS President @ Rs 2,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	
7.5.	2 Field Workers @ 2,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	
7.6.	BCS Liaison Worker @ Rs 2,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	
7.7.	10% Staff Fund	24,000	24,000	24,000	792,000
8.	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE				
8.1.	23 Field Staff Motorcycles @ Rs 1,500 p.m.	414,000	414,000	414,000	
8.2.	6 TataMobiles @ Rs 6,000 p.m.	432,000	432,000	432,000	

8.3.	2 Cars @ Rs 4,000 p.m.	96,000	96,000	96,000	2,826,000
9. ADMINISTRATION COSTS					
9.1.	Electricity bills @ Rs 15,000 p.m.	180,000	180,000	180,000	
9.2.	Telephone bills @ Rs 15,000 p.m.	180,000	180,000	180,000	
9.3.	Printing costs	35,000	35,000	35,000	
9.4.	Postage charges @ Rs 1,500 p.m.	18,000	18,000	18,000	
9.5.	Paper and stationery costs	70,000	70,000	70,000	
9.6.	Building taxes for 4 campuses	40,000	40,000	40,000	
9.7.	Rents @ Rs 7,000 p.m.	84,000	84,000	84,000	
9.8.	Campus maintenance @ Rs 8,000 p.m.	96,000	96,000	96,000	
9.9.	AMC for computers and electronic equipment	175,000	175,000	175,000	
9.10.	Software maintenance @ Rs 3,000 p.m.	36,000	36,000	36,000	
9.11.	Travel costs @ Rs 10,000 p.m.	120,000	120,000	120,000	
9.12.	P&T Dedicated line and fax rental	100,000	100,000	100,000	
9.13.	Miscellaneous @ Rs 10,000 p.m.	120,000	120,000	120,000	
9.14.	Audit Fees	40,000	40,000	40,000	3,882,000
10. CAPITAL COSTS					
10.1.	Cost of 121 bicycles to be supplied to CSUs in the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 1,200	145,200			
10.2.	Construction of 15 Community Halls in the central villages of the erstwhile EZE Area @ Rs 50,000		750,000		
10.3.	Construction of 1 women's training hall at the BCS Farm measuring 1,000 sft @ Rs 250	250,000			
10.4.	Construction of 1 women's dormitory at the BCS Farm measuring 1,000 sft @ Rs 250	250,000			
10.5.	Cost of computer hardware upgradation including modems, terminals, etc.	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,995,200
11. DLDP IN THE ERSTWHILE ICCO AREAS					
11.1.	DLDP wages for 3,381 families in the erstwhile Icco Areas to undertake 3 years of soil and water conservation works @ Rs 15 per day for 100 days every year (less 50 days already sanctioned for the 1st year)	2,535,750	5,071,500	5,071,500	
11.2.	DLDP wages for 3,074 families in Bagepalli Taluk to undertake once-off maintenance works for 75 days @ Rs 15 per day (less Rs 600,000 already sanctioned for the 1st year)	552,750	1,152,750	1,152,750	
11.3.	Disposition fund for demonstrating sustainable agricultural practices in all 216 villages (less Rs 150,000 already sanctioned)	138,000	288,000	288,000	
11.4.	5 Agriculturists @ Rs 4,000 p.m.	240,000	240,000	240,000	
11.5.	5 DLDP Field Workers @ Rs 2,000 p.m.	120,000	120,000	120,000	
11.6.	10% Staff Fund	36,000	36,000	36,000	
11.7.	Running costs of 5 motorcycles @ Rs 1,500 p.m.	90,000	90,000	90,000	17,709,000
TOTAL		24,915,165	28,156,315	26,425,565	79,497,044

10. A LONGER TERM PERSPECTIVE FOR THE CONSORTIUM

An informed friend recently commented that the greatest advantage of consortia was that, short of stealing the silver ware from the table, they go on and on. We do not consider this to

be greatest novelty in this particular Consortium. But the inferences to honesty and long term continuity are important ones and have to be commented on.

Not that we consider ourselves to be exceptionally honest. Far from it. We have always believed that the tendency for dishonesty is deeply ingrained. It stems from various insecurities, real and pretended, as well as from inexcusable traits which are base in character. It is just that we have always understood the role of social pressure in ensuring decent behaviour. Only systemic pressures stemming from a set up that tolerates nothing less than total openness and transparency in all matters of public and private finance *prevent* individuals from acting in all kinds of obnoxious manners. And we have worked hard, deliberately and consciously, to put such a system into place beyond any repudiation

ADATS and her northern partners have, time and time again, shown a high degree of maturity in dealing with difficult situations and differing opinions. We have sufficient faith in the quality of our work and a deep enough understanding of all the elements that go in it – including the non funding contribution of our funding partners – to realise that the Coolie Sangha building process still has some purchase in it. Enough, in fact, to carry it forward for most of the 10 years that this Consortium assures in principle.

ICCO support will go on for 3 years, NOVIB for another 6 years and EZE for 8 years more. Otherwise there wouldn't have been any point in starting in the first place. We believe that we are all mature players who took conscious and well deliberated organisational decisions in spite of the fact that, at times, the ebb of events took us deeper in than we had originally intended. The huge increase in the number of villages and families in the NOVIB Extensions is a case in point. The taking up of 2nd phase DLDP (land restoration) works in Bagepalli Taluk when ADATS was on the verge of withdrawing from these villages is another. In the former case it was the exuberance of Coolies who felt that they had intuitively glimpsed at a solution that nothing else in wider society offered them. In the latter it was a deepening of our understanding on matters environmental. These are bound to continue. The most carefully planned and steered social interventions go out of control (if that is the word). But if such diversions are towards an enhancing and deepening, towards a betterment of the total effort, then why not?

No, the ADATS Consortium does not guarantee a continuity which was conspicuously absent in earlier times. After all, in the words of the Memorandum of Understanding, “contributions will be in tune with present commitments”. But at the same time, nothing contained in these paragraphs should belittle the exciting possibilities that have been opened up through this ADATS Consortium. The possibility to sit in the midst of hundreds of Coolies in different situation locales with a certain assurance of continuity regarding the core activities of Coolie Sangha building.

Another oft used argument when “selling” the idea of consortia is that accounting and reporting procedures would be simplified. These too have not attracted us to the Consortium. They already were manageable tasks at ADATS which, we believe, we performed with some degree of proficiency.

What then are the unique contributions that this Consortium is going to make, we have wondered these past months.

- It will lead to a maturing of the partnership, taking it beyond the plane of individual relationships with sympathisers and well-wishers within northern NGOs, and
- It will be a joint discovery of potential and possibilities, creating a new enthusiasm to find answers and resources to translate these into actions. This will be

somehow different from the administrative rat trap that endless proposal making/processing and report writing/filing has surely led us into.

For there surely is potential in both, the Coolies as well as in us the development workers of the South and North who have chosen to accompany them. Huge and untapped potential which, if opened up with the right milieu, will unleash a creative energy.

When with a group of young Coolies in one of the oldest CSUs in Bagepalli, there was this terrific incredulity when recounting their parent's plight and agony to build the CSU. Incredulity at such an absurd situation ever having existed. On cool and rational musing -without the nostalgia that inevitably creeps in to justify courses opted to in the past- one realised that the obstacles and efforts were not, after all, so great when compared to the results (or is it the other way around?). Pressures like caste taboos and feudal values were real enough at that time, often frustratingly so. But they vanished, as if into thin air. A soberer recounting of those days gave us all a sense of magic. As though the endless struggle and sleepless nights were like but the wave of a wand, the making of an effortless magic...

Will not the same happen to efforts of today with the coming of the morrow? History has the habit of converting extraordinary achievements of yesteryears into ordinary facts of life which we take for granted today. And rightly so. Because we have to move on without endless ruminating.

New understandings in the field of management techniques have only made this more likely. What else is the development of a scientifically tested Model which works? What else is the development of an implementation technology, through the beading together of proven intervention strategies which achieve different objectives in various fields, using the common thread of a single objective? Does not management contribute to the creation of this sense of magic? Through the ease of doing something that initially took so much more of our time and energy, and left such a lot to chance?

What then is in store for us in the future? Surely it is not going to be merely the easier and better repetition of things done in the past (we readily confess that this project proposal indicates merely that!). The human spirit in us is far too alive to allow such a limited happening during the next 10, or for that matter, even 3 years. Many more things are going to happen during the implementation of the somewhat mundane core activities of Coolie Sangha building. Even the best of astrologers cannot foretell them with any degree of accuracy. But we can predict the general lines with far more certainty.

The political economy of India has changed in spite of all the indignant protestations of many. It is time to come to terms with this irrefutable fact and realise that capitalism does not have a *Manu's Dharma Shastra*⁷ to predicate change on pre-determined lines, be they of bounty or of impeding doom. It is time to realise that an organised and enlightened people can, from the bottom up, shape the course of things to come. Each lot grasps the positivity inherent in liberal bourgeois ordering and creates something slightly different, something slightly more humane. The relevance of our work is therefore not just for the poor alone. Visions of alternate lifestyles that guide sweeping societal changes are far more viable now than they were just a few years back.

Again, in spite of all our protestations to the contrary, the market economy has led to a standardisation which has made all social knowledge valuable and the Indian-ness of knowledge is no more at any dearer premium.⁸ The time has come when every single one of us develop-

⁷ The ancient Indian king sage established the hierarchy of the caste system and gave a code of conduct for feudal existence

⁸ Please note that there is no attempt here to deride indigenous knowledge. We also realise that the old contradiction between "theoretical stances" and knowledge of so-called "field realities" will continue to thrive.

ment workers, irrespective of whether we are placed in the South or in the North, can contribute with valuable suggestions to feasibly strategize for real development.

Take, for example, the issue of strikes. Earlier it was possible to organise localised struggles for higher wages and better working conditions only through an intimate assessment of micro-situations existing under the local landlord who himself was seeped in very peculiar and particular custom. Now it is only those who “contribute” to the larger economy -not marginal fringe players whose connection to the mainstream is at best questionable- who have the leverage to strike. The poor would therefore not just have to chase the objective of solving their immediate problem of poverty, but they will simultaneously also have to manoeuvre themselves into visible and clearly perceived positions of obvious contribution.

Milk and vegetable producers organised into co-operatives – which are not too different from the Coops and Consumer Movements of Europe – immediately come to mind.

Closer home, an institutional development of ADATS – as different from that of the Coolie Sangha – is going to take place during the coming years. A latent capacity is quickly built in any team of efficient persons constantly doing the same job. This creative potential can be tapped to expand Coolie Sangha building into more Taluks of North Kolar district, and also to intensify our activities in these same villages. We suspect that such intensification will be along material (income generation, sustainable agriculture, health and children’s education) as well as non material lines of cultural intervention to touch more and more facets of Coolie existence.

The 2 Organisations policy has often been mistakenly interpreted, even by colleagues at this end, as an apology for the NGO. As if only the people’s organisation counted and that the NGO was a temporary time server, a *via media*, which would conveniently wither away into obliteration. We need time to clarify our own identities as development workers for only then can we understand our contribution in the post-intervention phase after withdrawal.

Speaking of time, the value in just allowing the Coolie Sangha to mellow cannot be understated. This, perhaps, is one of the greatest shortfalls of all management oriented approaches which the series of interventions to build CSUs has definitely become. As a result of the sheer breathlessness of activities, one following the other in rapid succession, we often miss out on recognising the larger impact that the Coolie Sangha is having in the villages - the working of the *effective minority*.

Consortia can deal with resource constraints in a responsible manner. But they should not be shallowly seen as mechanisms to get out of ever increasing budgetary demands. On the one hand, when we in the South have a clear idea of what is available we could restrict our plans within these limits. On the other hand, when there is a through and through sharing of what exactly is available, where, and how it can be tapped, the most can be made of scarce resources.

Additional resources will be found in 3 ways.

- Through a steady increase in contributions by the present partners.
- Through the finding of new partners to join the Consortium.
- And finally, as the Coolie Sangha becomes more mature and capable, through attracting other players like the government, banks and international agencies to participate.

And finally, we do believe that our Northern partners can take a subtle clue or two as to how to organise their funding relationship from us in the South since we too are placed in almost identical situations of resource restrictions when dealing with the poor. But these can be communicated only in impalpable ways through the sharing of ever so many live anecdotes and experiences.

Akin to the manner in which one avoids poor cousins, the feeling has already crept into many minds that, at the end of the day, it is a question of who has the money and how much they are willing to part with. This is a thoroughly alienating feeling that robs both, the seeker as well as the giver, of all pleasure that emanates from the exciting venture we are both in together. The ADATS Consortium could be an opportunity to convert bureaucratic tendencies which have crept into our relationship through a rekindling of the spirit of the late '60s when relationships between development workers situated in the North and South were not so structured, but at the same time taking into account the realities and requirements of the '90s.